

SUBJECT STATEMENT

BG – Lt. Ben Gordon

MV – Sgt. Michael Vanzo

DG – Sgt. Dennis Gonzalez

SG – Sgt. Sean Gowan

BG Alright this will be a recorded interview in reference to IA 26-001. The subject in this case is Sgt. Dennis Gonzalez. I'm Lt. Gordon along with Sgt. Vanzo, we are both with the Volusia Sheriff's Office Internal Affairs unit. Also present with Sgt. Gonzalez is Sgt. Gowan. Today's date is February 3, 2026, the current time is 1013 hours. The location of this interview is the Sheriff's Office administrative building in Deland. Sgt. Gonzalez, are you aware this interview is being recorded?

DG Yes.

BG I am conducting an official investigation, official administrative investigation concerning the following general order violations. GO-026.02.V.G.3.a – Supervisor Responsibility – Each supervisor shall provide guidance and training to subordinate staff for effective and efficient achievement of established goals and objectives. A supervisor has the responsibility and authority for assigning, reviewing, monitoring activities of subordinate staff under their command. In addition, a supervisor shall provide clear directions to subordinates and address specific problems for completion of work assignments. The supervisor shall also ensure that assigned employees comply with applicable federal and state laws, Volusia County ordinances, and all VSO written direction as provided through general orders, Training Bulletins, policies and procedures. GO-026-02.V.B.3 – Disciplinary Rules – Any conduct or action, on-duty or off-duty, of such seriousness that disciplinary action is considered warranted. GO-026-02.V.C.5.m – Negligence, Not Endangering – Employees shall not ignore or violate official general orders, orders, or supervisory instructions or knowingly fail to properly execute the duties and responsibilities of their assigned positions. GO-026-02.V.G.1.a – General Proficiency – VSO personnel are required to maintain the job knowledge, skills and abilities required for the performance of the duties and responsibilities attendant to their positions. As a Florida law enforcement officer and notary public of the State of Florida, I'm empowered to take sworn statements. At this time, I would ask that you raise your hand to be sworn please. Do you solemnly swear that the statement you're about to give is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you god?

DG I do.

BG Excellent. Any false statement about material matters given by a witness under oath will constitute perjury, which is a third-degree felony, according to Florida State Statute section 837.02. Do you understand that if you knowingly make a material misstatement of facts to me during this investigation, you have committed the crime of perjury?

DG Yes.

BG Sign on that top line. If you would just sign the witness for me. Thank you. Alright please state your name for the record.

DG Dennis Gonzalez.

BG Ok prior to this interview were you provided with a completed case file in regards to this investigation?

DG Yes.

BG Ok and you had an opportunity to review such file before the, for this interview correct?

DG Yes.

BG Ok. Also, before we got on the recording I know that you acknowledged the Garrity warning form. Do you have any questions concerning the Garrity, your law enforcement bill of rights or anything else before we start?

DG No.

BG Ok do you mind if Sgt. Vanzo asks you questions as well as myself for this interview?

DG That's fine.

BG So how long have you been in law enforcement?

DG Since 2010.

BG Ok. And what's your current duty assignment?

DG Patrol Sergeant District 6 Debary.

BG Ok.

DG Delta shift.

BG So based on the nature of the, I'm sure you've read the case file. This stems from a complaint from an incident that you were involved in. The nature of the allegations present, revolve around the actions of Dep. Royce ultimately arresting [REDACTED] for stalking. Your involvement was as I understand it as the Royce's supervisor during this incident is that correct?

DG Yes sir.

BG Ok. So walk me through what you know about the incident and what you recall.

DG What I recall was I guess Royce was at the [REDACTED] fire station and I guess the victim [REDACTED] made contact with him and was telling him about an incident that happened in Deltona.

BG Ok.

DG Royce said that...

BG Do you know what time this was by chance?

DG It was at night.

BG Ok.

DG Yeah. So...

BG Evening time or like night, night?

DG No, evening.

BG Ok.

DG It was evening it wasn't, I mean it ended up being later on because it took a couple hours I guess.

BG Ok.

DG For it to, to...

BG And you're talking the fire station that's [REDACTED]?

DG Right [REDACTED] yeah.

BG Ok.

DG So he let me know that the, the, she's a fireman so that we had he was gonna investigate what was going, what was she's talking about. My understanding was that they tried investigating it, so it was like blown off by district 4.

BG M hm.

DG So I was like alright lets, lets investigate and make sure that we don't mess this up.

BG M hm.

DG And so Royce started the investigation over there.

BG Ok. What made you think that district 4 essentially blew it off?

DG Well Royce was telling me that, that they, they said that there was no stalking charge (unintelligible)

BG That district 4 said there was no stalk...

DG District 4, yeah there was no stalking.

BG Ok.

DG So Royce was telling me that there was so he, he was gonna do the investigation for it.

BG Ok. Do you know why Royce was at the [REDACTED] by chance? Does he have friends there or is that normal?

DG No we, we, no we don't we don't go over there. I think I don't know if it was that night that we had the radios that we needed to get checked but it, but I don't know why he would be there cuz we normally don't go there.

BG Yeah.

DG Usually we just brief and then just go about our way so.

BG Is there like a, so I know district 4 they have that car washing depot that sometimes I know that when I was there we would go drive our cars over just to wash the cars real quick, so anything like that?

DG No I've, the only time I've been to the fire station was for the radios...

BG Ok.

DG ...but that's about it.

BG Ok.

DG Yeah. We never usually go anywhere we don't go over there.

BG So your understanding is so you had briefing this is night shift, right?

DG Yes.

BG So 6p 1800 you have, do you have briefing usually right at 1800'ish?

DG Yeah 6:00 or so yeah.

BG Ok. So you brief 45 minutes to an hour essentially.

DG Probably.

BG And then everybody kind of disperses.

DG M hm.

BG And you think Royce at that point just kind of went over to the fire side maybe did the radios?

DG I guess yeah.

BG Ok.

DG Yeah.

BG And so he calls you and walk me through what he tells you on the phone.

DG That we had (unintelligible) the investigation that she came flagged him down and that he was gonna investigate it and he...

BG Do you remem, sorry to cut you off. Do you remember anything particular about the conversation he had with cuz it's actually I think it's [REDACTED] correct?

MV [REDACTED]

BG [REDACTED], sorry. Do you remember any conversation, anything, anything of note that when he was talking to [REDACTED] about what had happened?

DG No, no I mean...

BG Do you know if she was upset that hey like district 4 blew it off and that's why she kind of reengaged with Royce?

DG No I didn't, cuz I, I never made contact with her.

BG Ok.

DG So cuz he called me on the phone but no I don't I don't think she was upset or anything she just was telling him about it.

BG Ok.

DG From what I understood.

BG Ok.

DG So, so he started the investigation, got statements I guess and then went and made contact with the suspect.

BG Ok.

DG Um...

BG Well I'm gonna stop you real quick. Do you know what the time difference, so I think he arrests her closer towards we'll call it midnight.

DG M hm.

BG It's around midnight'ish. Obviously 1800's briefing, is there a conversation between you and him before he contacts the female at the house in [REDACTED] about this the suspect (inaudible)

DG The suspect?

BG Yeah.

DG I think there was to where he was telling me what the...

BG [REDACTED]

DG What the victim [REDACTED] was saying and I was like ok. At this point I thought it was just gonna be a info report cuz you know it's, but he saw the video and then they were able to get the license plate reader...

BG Yeah.

DG ...and get the tag and you know identify the car and then I was just (unintelligible) investigate it and later on I was in a, I was on a call with Martinez something about hit and run with FHP that's when he calls me and says that, that she admitted to everything she did it and all that stuff and I'm like are you serious she did it? Cuz I thought it was silly.

BG Why did you think it was silly?

DG Because they were, they were throwing tampons at the house and its...

BG Yeah kind of a...

DG It's like...

BG ...weird odd thing to do.

DG Yes. Like a, childish I think.

BG Yeah. I think you mentioned that on the phone with him.

DG I did.

BG I think you mentioned though this is like a prank or something like that.

DG I did yeah, it's like a prank are you serious? And I remember saying you know, you know she can go to jail for that you know kind of thing cuz at that point we're, we're thinking it's a DV stalking. And so he got all the information and then he, he told me over the phone this is what we have they admitted to everything and everything and then I was like ok well after talking I said ok we can do, we can do the DV stalking. Since she's a fireman, I had to notify the watch commander.

BG Yeah.

DG But I, I just gave him the gist as DV stalking she's a fire, firefighter but I didn't...

BG Ok.

DG ...I don't remember giving on, any details on it probably just uh...

BG Just like a hey this is because we're arresting a firefighter...

DG Yeah just like...

BG ...common courtesy.

DG ...either that or, or cuz I did remember talking to him, to him over the phone but I don't know if I text him like the notification.

BG Yeah.

DG Cuz I don't know if the watch commanders need that.

BG Yeah, yeah.

DG Cuz they're fire...

BG For their log yeah.

DG Yeah for the log and stuff. And that was it.

MV Did you have any conversations with anyone from district 4...

DG Yes.

MV ...any supervisors?

DG I talked to Billy about it, Billy called me. Because by that time I think by that time I said ok to arrest and they were at the district 4 office.

BG Yeah I think they were...

DG So they...

BG ...doing briefing or something or other.

DG Yeah so I talked to Billy, Billy me and Billy talk because we always talk and you know if, if, usually what happens if, if the victim is in district 6 we're not gonna have district 4 come do it we'll just come do it over here so.

BG Yeah.

DG And that goes vice versa so, and then I guess we talked about it. He said he didn't agree with it, he said eh I don't know if, if, if we have it or not. I was like I think we do and then ultimately I made the decision of the arrest but, but um we did I did talk to Billy about it and all that but. So.

BG Ok. Anybody else that you talked to besides Billy and the watch commander about it by chance?

DG I might have since it's a fire, I might have sent a notification to command staff...

BG Ok like your COC district 6.

DG Yeah, yeah, yeah COC yeah.

BG Just to give them a heads up and everything. So walk me back a little bit I know we're going back in time. So when, when Royce and I don't know if you watched his body camera but when Royce gets on scene the first conversation he has with you over the phone he says something to the effect of you already know what I want to do.

DG M hm.

BG Type thing. What like why, describe to me why he would say that or what, what predicated that?

DG Oh to determine if we're arresting or not arresting. So obviously he was already gonna be determining that you know he was gonna make the arrest for DV cuz he thought it was gonna be...

BG Before he even got on scene he was gonna make or he...

DG So...

BG ...wanted to make the arrest for DV?

DG So it's, it's like it's looking like DV stalking...

BG Yeah.

DG ...and it most probably we're gonna or we're gonna make the arrest. I didn't think that she was gonna admit to doing everything.

BG Yeah.

DG And so I, I based it off of, of her statements her confession to doing everything that she did.

BG M hm.

DG And before he went and talked to her he's like well you already know what I, what I wanna do which would probably be an arrest. But we still we were still gonna wait to see what they, it said. If they would have denied everything I don't think we would have had I don't think we would have had for the being stalked probably just to do a report but them admitting to it and the video surveillance and, and you know people going in and doing it that's how I based it.

BG Ok. So she gets arrested she goes to, transports to district, district 4 because it's obviously closer.

DG Yeah.

BG And I think district 4 deputy arrests another female for DUI and they end up transporting both females out to the jail and so Royce I think comes back to the city at that point around like 2 I think is the approximate time. At the end of the shift I'm assuming, so, oh before he submits the 707 does he send it to you in email to look at before he's before he, he leaves?

DG No I think he says it's, it's in the system for it and then I reviewed it and then approved it.

BG Ok but did you approve, review and approve it before she was sent to jail?

DG Yes.

BG (inaudible)

DG Yes.

BG Ok was there anything in the report that was different than what was portrayed in the conversations between you and Royce?

DG I don't think so.

BG Ok.

DG So.

BG What did you interpret when Royce told you on the phone that she admitted to everything?

DG That they went out there, obviously there was other people and that they went out there and then drove over there to the house, threw the tampons and then I guess drove away and then came back to throw more, to throw more from what I recall. And then that, that was it that was gonna be the...

BG So you thought there was two incidents of them driving?

DG No as he's saying that they, they went, threw it, drove off cuz I guess there was a car coming or something...

BG Yeah.

DG ...and then came back and threw more I guess so.

BG Ok. So tell me about what proceeds after that. So he arrests the female it's like, I don't remember what day of the week that was. I don't know if you worked the next day but walk me through any other conversations happen about the case as, after it transpired?

DG Reference to that? No other than the you know it was an arrest because they were throwing tampons kind of thing but nothing else came about.

BG Did at any point did Royce ever say that he reviewed or asked you to review Dep. Bartzer's? Cuz it was I think it's Det. Bartzer now.

DG (unintelligible)

BG I think it was Dep. Bartzer that went out to the original incident.

DG M hm.

BG Any chance that you or Royce reviewed the body camera from that incident?

DG No I did not.

BG Ok.

DG I didn't review any body camera.

BG Did you review Royce's body camera from the, from the arrest incident?

DG No.

BG Ok.

MV Is there any reason why only [REDACTED] was arrested and not the others involved?

DG So the others involved were out of state supposedly.

MV Any charges filed against them or?

DG I do not think so.

MV Ok. Is there any...

BG Do you know why not?

DG Well cuz I didn't, they, they weren't gonna be DV related and so it's gonna be file, filing...

BG 707's.

DG 707's.

BG But do you know why the decision was made not to file on the, [REDACTED]? So the, the, the trifecta if you will is [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and then the defendant...

DG [REDACTED] yeah.

BG ... [REDACTED] essentially. And [REDACTED] is from somewhere up north I want to say Ohio but I could...

DG I thought they were both from Ohio.

BG She's [REDACTED] is local, she was actually on her, willing to come and respond to the house when Royce was, was there. Cuz the, there's a I think there's a bunch of dogs cuz she had dog crates in the back of her truck I think it was, was in the, she's a trainer or some, something of that nature. And so she had a bunch of dogs so [REDACTED] was actually enroute to the house...

DG Oh.

BG ...to take care of the dogs.

DG I didn't know that.

BG So I didn't know if there was a conversation that was had. Did Royce say hey we're not gonna charge the other people because they're out of town or how did that unravel?

DG It was just arrested her for the, for the DV stalking on it cuz I thought that I thought it applied for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were out of state so doing an affidavit and filed it I didn't think it was gonna go anywhere. But obviously.

BG Why didn't you think it, that was not gonna go anywhere but the DV would?

DG Because it's a DV because it's on we, we could have charged them with it but it was just gonna be filed on it because it's not DV related.

BG Yeah.

DG That's (inaudible)

BG What would you do in, what do you think would be a normal situation like if there were three people that were involved in an action and they all were a part of a crime that occurred?

DG Uh, yeah normally it, everybody would go to jail so.

BG Ok. Or be filed on.

DG Or be filed on yes.

MV Do you know if there's any personal connection between any of the victims or reported victims and James, Dep. James?

DG No.

MV Ok. Any conversations that he's had or to your knowledge has he mentioned speaking with any of the victims about professional business in the past?

DG No.

MV Ok.

BG At any point after the case was resolved, obviously it got no info'd the state dropped it the judge found no probable cause at first appearance. Was there a conversation between you and Royce or briefing after the fact or were you guys aware or notified of, of the status of the case?

DG No we weren't, we weren't notified of the no info.

BG Ok.

DG So.

MV Any discussion of any like lesser things to handle the situation like littering or anything like that?

DG No. No. It was DV stalking.

BG Did you by any chance watch Royce's BWC of the incident?

DG No I read the, the notes.

BG Ok. So in Royce's conclusion when he talks to you, so I'll tell you the I'm sure you read the complaint right?

DG M hm.

BG And if you recall when you were like in FTEP or a brand new deputy I think one of the, the foundational pieces of advice that I think is given to, to every single employee probably every cop everywhere is to not make up your mind of a situation before you talk to everybody.

DG M hm.

BG Because everybody in this room, we've gone to a DV and we're like we're convinced oh this person's a victim and then we go and we see you know injuries or there's witness statements and it's like oh I had that completely wrong and then we kind of readjust our focus to the actual defendant (unintelligible)

DG M hm.

BG The concern was that there was like a almost a premeditated closed off an unwillingness to hear another side and in the fact when Royce is talking to [REDACTED] she actually doesn't confess to, to the everything...

DG M hm.

BG ...like he tells you. She confesses that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] came over with all these tampons and that they kind of had this weird plan and she was caught off guard by everything. And her statement obviously it's her statement to us is that she drove and she they didn't know where they were going and then kind of half way through the drive she's like wait one plus one has come to two and I think I know what you kind of guys are, are, are kind of thinking this is odd. And so that's the concerning part right is from the, from the complainant's side that this was made the decision was made and that Royce was unwilling to, to hear another side of it. Obviously there's some, there's issues that they feel with the conduct of Royce while he was on scene and I think that that's something that we obviously have to discuss with him directly...

DG M hm.

BG ...that's not, you're not there. Was there, I would like to know your reasoning as to not responding to the scene.

DG To, to the house?

BG Yeah.

DG Where the...

BG M hm.

DG I didn't even think about it.

BG Ok.

DG Honestly Royce was doing the investigation, he's been a deputy for a couple years and I was gonna trust his judgment and then whatever he tells me over the phone actually I did not even think about going over there.

BG Ok.

DG Honestly.

BG And, and I'm not trying to back you into a corner I think a routine DV stalking...

DG Oh yeah, yeah.

BG ...I'm not think, I don't know if that in your I'm interested to know if there was something that was a flag was coming up at any point where like hey this, this seems a little bit odd, anything of that? Anything seem like are we making a mountain out of a mole hill type thing or is is something up.

DG No I just I just thought it was a childish thing that they're, they're that they did throwing the tampons other than that but that was the...

BG At what point, and so I, I know you talked to Royce and you know you mentioned prank, juvenile, childish...

DG M hm.

BG ...like kids rolling, throwing TP over like TP'ing a house or something like or egging a house. What in your mind made you believe that there was probable cause at what point for, for this interaction?

DG Um...

BG Cuz it seems like full disclosure the first conversation it seems like you're very much on the fence.

DG M hm, yes.

BG And hopefully you, I...

DG Yes.

BG ...I wish you would watch that because you seem like you're asking a hundred percent of the right questions. Like what's, what was the pattern like what was the course of conduct.

DG Yeah, I thought we weren't gonna arrest I thought we were just gonna make a documentation.

BG Like an information report?

DG Yeah info report that's what I thought.

BG So I guess what the key is what I'm trying to figure out is how did it switch from an information report to a stalking in your mind?

DG Her admitting to doing what she did with the stalking.

BG Ok but if what you thought was not a crime how does her admittance to not a crime...

DG No it's, it's DV stalking but...

BG So you thought the only crux was that she wasn't gonna confess to it.

DG Yes.

BG You thought that it was a crime still.

DG It's still yeah it's still DV stalking because it's they identified the car the truck and it's her...

BG Do you still, do you still believe that it's DV stalking?

DG Yes.

BG You do?

DG But...

BG Tell me what, tell me what the Florida State Statute is for DV stalking.

DG Oh I don't, I'd have to read it from the, from the book.

BG Do you not know what the elements, the elements are for DV stalking?

DG I'd have to read it I don't I don't like to say it off the bat I usually read it.

BG Can you read me like not the verbatim but a working understanding of DV stalking?

DG Yeah it's, it's following or harassing kind of thing. When it comes to the, the just it'd be better if I read it off to what it is cuz I, cuz I read it that night just to make sure.

BG Ok.

DG But.

SG Can I help, can I talk to him for a, so explain stalking. Take out the DV side of things...

BG Yeah, yeah.

DG ...just explain stalking.

BG We all know DV is...

DG Yeah just, just following, harassing kind of thing to where it's you know they're doing it on, on people that and then the victim it's you know it's it's bothered it's it's fearful of what's happening kind of thing.

SG And then what makes it DV stalking?

DG Because they were in a relationship.

BG Yeah I'm not, and I'm not I'm not I think the state attorney mentioned something about the DV in the, in the correspondence with Vanzo. I off the rip I, I do think that they lived together I don't think there was any any contention about them living together at one point as a family unit right? I think the contention is is the fact that you still believe that there was DV stalking after a judge, state attorney and...

DG (inaudible)

BG ...multiple other people to include another deputy that went there and determined that there was no crime.

DG Well yeah but I mean yeah now you know I look at, at that time yes I, I thought we had it.

MV Was there any thought process because [REDACTED] not they never lived together and they're not related or any though process on the charge stemming from also on [REDACTED]? For [REDACTED]? I understand [REDACTED] were together...

DG M hm.

MV ...but [REDACTED] just (unintelligible) [REDACTED] so I know you guys charged times two for stalking.

DG Oh ok. Two charges, ok. So...

BG That may have been what the state was referring to about the, the maybe one count of DV stalking...

DG One count yeah ok.

BG ...the other one being a stalking.

DG So that was my was the DV stalking.

BG But and I want to reiterate this. But you after so let me ask you this, after reviewing all of this do you still think that there was DV stalking for the for the incident?

DG For the arrest?

BG Yeah, well for the criminal charge. Like whether you file or make a physical arrest doesn't matter like do you think that there was, do you think that there was stalking?

SC They're asking you to look at hindsight now having all everything...

BG Looking at everything presented to you in a complete case packet if you will.

DG Yeah, I mean yeah we could have just done a 14 report an info report.

BG So again.

DG Yes.

BG Do you think that there was stalking looking in hindsight?

DG Hindsight.

SG The question is if I, if I reframe this wrong let me know. The question is if tomorrow you had this book in front of you and you read everything in this book and a deputy calls you and goes sergeant I'm about to make an arrest...

DG No, no.

SG ...for DV stalking would you approve it?

DG No.

BG Ok.

MV I know on a phone conversation Royce mentions something about third party contact. Can you like explain...

BG Was that a factor in your decision?

DG Third party contact, no.

BG Ok. So, going back to the state statute the, the pattern of conduct whether how short brief or how long what was the pattern of conduct that made you believe that there was stalking that night?

DG I believe was the going...

BG Or course of conduct (inaudible)

DG Yeah just the driving by then driving back.

BG So just so you know what happened was the vehicle pulls in front of the house on Ring camera I think it's it may (unintelligible) I don't know what the brand is it may be another surveillance company but and there's a car that pulls up behind it and so they have to like move to get over right. And then they like they're, they're still there and they're they just I don't even know if they even started throwing tampons I, I don't know that they even, even threw tampons started throwing tampons yet but that the only reason that they, like I think it's helpful to notate that they didn't this wasn't like a drive by to scout it out. What I think maybe led you to believe that there was more of a pattern of conduct or a course of conduct this was all within one night one evening...

DG M hm.

BG ...and one incident. So again I'm curious as to where you felt that there was a course of conduct of harassment that's directed specifically as state statute says directed at the victims.

DG It, that was it the driving by.

BG Just the one incident.

DG And the...

BG So what would...

DG So it's like it...

BG What was the, what was the course of conduct? Like how was there more than one incident is what I, I guess my the biggest I think what the state said what the what the, I don't I think what the state said and what my interpretation of looking at the incident was that this is a, this is a prank.

DG M hm.

BG This is a onetime thing, I think they've not been to I don't know if you remember I don't think they've been in a relationship for close to like a year and a half to two years. There's been no direct contact between either party there's been no harassing phone calls there's been no drive by's as indicated with the LPR's there's, there's not a pattern there there's just that one evening that one event. And so my, my mind and I think what Royce was trying to spell out and we'll talk to him obviously but I think what Royce was trying to spell out was the idea between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] the premeditated if you will the preplanned of going to the CVS or wherever they went I can't remember exactly where they went but to go purchase the tampons I think they painted the tampons red then they went over and had dinner and then they kind of were like oh we're gonna scheme this load up in the truck and then I think he mistakenly took that as the course of conduct of harassment. And I was wondering if you if, if that was where you thought it was as well or if you thought...

DG No.

BG ...something completely different.

DG I think that was the course of action that we thought was gonna be.

BG Ok so the only thing that I would note too is that that's not directed at the victim.

DG M hm.

BG Right? It's there's no premeditated stalking. That's not, that's not a charge.

DG M hm.

BG To preplan something. And I'm not trying to, to I don't wanna put words in your mouth, but it almost feels like Royce convinces you essentially to change your mind from this being kind of like a nothing burger into making an arrest. Is that accurate?

DG Well with the, with the information that he gave me so.

BG But it's just the confession that's the only thing that, that changed it? Cuz there's back and forth on the phone both there's two different conversations and I would have loved for you to have watched the camera those two conversations to answer directly but you're very much like hey this is, this is like a juvenile prank.

DG M hm.

BG And then you ask great follow up questions like your questions are perfectly inline if you read the Florida State Statute like you're reading the Florida State Statute saying what's the course of conduct, is there a pattern. He mentions third party to you and you're like what's the third party and then it gets dissolved and there's no there's no establishment of a third party ever. But then he calls you cuz I think you made other phone calls and I think it was probably just to Billy.

DG M hm.

BG You made other phone calls and then you called back, again asked very good questions as to like hey how are we getting to this and he doesn't really in my opinion and this is just my opinion he doesn't ever establish stalking to you but there's a persistence with him and I know that he's a well-seasoned veteran patrol deputy...

DG M hm.

BG ...has been here for a long time has a good you know has a good standing. I understand that you would respect and listen to what his judgment would be and so I get like you not going to the call thinking that he's got it handled, I, I understand that especially for just a stalking. But I'm interested to know if, if his influence or reputation or whatever influenced your decision making in this process. And maybe potentially you allowed that to sway you into (unintelligible)...

DG Probably yeah.

BG Is that accurate?

DG Yeah. Sounds, yeah. I mean because I was just basing it off on all the information he gave me and because it's a fireman obviously you know I had to get, get all the ducks in a row sort of thing and uh...

BG But him wanting to pursue it is kind of what ultimately you acquiesce and were kind of like ok if you think that it's there I'll trust you on this one and let you do it. Is that...

DG Yeah.

BG ...accurate?

DG Yeah.

BG Ok. Again I don't wanna just I'm just...

DG No, no, no.

BG ...I'm just watching the BWC.

DG I'm just, I'm just thinking, thinking about it now.

BG Yeah.

DG I was just, yeah.

BG What do you think, was there concern about potential I mean obviously you called Billy do you normally call Billy with, with charges that are questionable?

DG Uh, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

BG And so in your mind you thought it was like it was close like it wasn't a clear cut you thought, you thought it was a good complete charge.

DG I, I think...

BG You had concerns.

DG Yeah I mean we had concerns but once, once I had the other the other things that was told to me and all that stuff I was, I was ok with the arrest but.

BG Now on, listen I'm we're just fact finders and I could bore you with the whole thing but and like I said I know you didn't watch Royce's footage but to Royce's credit too he's, he's pretty up front pretty bold in saying if I had it my way he, he kind of like early on in the conversation with the defendant tells her if I had it my way you'd be in the back of my patrol car already like you'd already be arrested but I'm gonna defer to what my sergeant says. And so then he talks to you and then you eventually give him the go ahead

the green light. We kind of talked about that you, if given this whole situation that you would have have done a different option. Do you think that that you're responsible at some part for this incident?

DG Yeah.

BG Ok. Do you have anything else?

MV I know [REDACTED] the one that was arrested, she's a firefighter as well as the victims. Do you have any other information or incidents involving Dep. James surrounding other firefighters where maybe he treated them poorly or unprofessionally or?

DG Not that I know of no.

MV Ok did you handle any complaints from citizens involving firefighters?

DG From, oh no from firefighters no.

BG There was a, in the complaint it talks a little bit about there's, there's in talking to the complainants there was a, comments made that potentially there's animosity or maybe it may be falsely perceived. How long, how long have you been Royce's supervisor?

DG Two years.

BG Ok.

DG Well he's swing shift so like two years.

BG But working in around, so for the record swing shift is like midnight to midnight?

DG 3 to 3.

BG 3 to 3.

DG But the last couple months, actually yeah he was with me because it was night shift so he was gonna be with me.

BG Ok and during your time in district 6 has the command staff or yourself ever been you know has that ever, has that flag ever been raised like woah there's a lot of firefighters having, Royce seems to be having issue with firefighters. Anything of that notion?

DG No.

BG Ok.

MV And then I know I asked the question about any personal connection with the reported victims. Do you know or have any information of any connection between Royce and the victim's father?

DG No.

MV [REDACTED]

BG And is there any connection between you and any, any individuals involved?

DG No I didn't know, I was reading this and I didn't know...

BG Anything...

DG ...her father was a corrections.

BG Ok.

DG Yeah so I'm, no.

BG So you no connections...

DG No.

BG ...Royce no connections that you're aware of?

DG No.

BG Ok. Anything else?

MV Yeah.

BG Ok give us one second we'll be right back ok? Is there anything that you would like to put on the record?

SG Yeah we were just talking for a second.

BG Yeah.

SG And in our discussion and in what I'm hearing coming out here I think it's important to note and maybe [REDACTED] wants to put it in his own words. I think that a driving factor in the decision to arrest was the DV component and if you want to put that in your own words you can do that but...

DG Yeah that's you know it had to do with the DV aspect of it too where you know we, we have to act on it. I did decide, it was my decision not Billy's or the watch commanders

that decided to go with the, with the arrest and knowing now it could have gone the other way which would have been a lot easier for everybody which would be to document the incident like you can when it comes to DV.

BG M hm.

DG You know I made the decision solely, so you know so if anybody's gonna be at fault it's gonna be me so. But I didn't intentionally do it...

BG Yeah.

DG ...out of you know malice or anything like that but.

BG And I think that's important to note. I think there's a perception right so we're all law enforcement. And it's 2026 I think there's a lot there's maybe some concern some fear...

DG M hm.

BG ...and so I know that we do things differently than other agencies and so I think it's helpful to know that there's no maliciousness or like an intentionality thing...

DG M hm.

BG ...that it was an honest mistake essentially.

DG Yeah.

BG Is that, is that correct?

DG Yes.

BG Ok. No I think that and from reading everything and from knowing the little bit that we know about the situation there's nothing that appears to be malice from your direction at all so in closing what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna read all the general orders and I want you to say yes or no as to whether or not you feel that you violated those general orders ok? Any questions? Ok. So as I did at the very beginning, I'm not gonna read the entire definition of it so I'm just gonna read the title and I'll have you respond. So the first one will be supervisor responsibility. Do you feel like you violated that general order?

DG Yes.

BG Disciplinary rules which is any conduct on or off duty of such seriousness that disciplinary action is warranted?

DG No.

BG Ok. Negligence not endangering?

DG Huh uh, no.

BG Ok. And general proficiency?

DG Yeah proficiency yeah.

BG Ok. We appreciate your time. As this is an active investigation and we still have another subject to interview you're encouraged not to discuss it just use your union rep, don't discuss it with the other subject alright? The ending time is 1056 hours.

I, Sgt. Michael Vanzo swear that the forgoing is an accurate transcription of the sworn recorded statement of Sgt. Dennis Gonzalez taken by me on February 3, 2026.

(Signed)

M. Vanzo 8469
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 14th Day of April, 2026.

[Signature]
Signature of Notary Public-State of Florida



(Print, type or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public)

My Commission Expires:

My Commission Number is:

Personally Known ✓

Produced identification

Type of Identification Produced